1076.L.3 21
19

MERRY TALES.

OF THE

Wise Men of GOTHAM.

Printed and Sold in London.

THE MERRY TALES OF THE Wise Men of GOTHAM.

TALE I.

THERE were two men of Gotha and one of them was for going Nottingham market to buy sheep, a the other came from the market, and bo met together on Nottingham bridge. Well met, said one to the other. Wit are you going, said he that came fr Nottingham: Marry, said he that w going thither, I am going to the mar to buy sheep.—To buy sheep! said t other, which way will you bring the home? Marry said the other, I will bri them over this bridge.—By Robin Hoo said he that came from Nottingham, b thou shalt not.—Py Maid Margery, sa the other, but I will. You shall no said the one. I will, said the other.

Then they their beat staves one agai the ot her, and then against the groun

if an hundred ſheep had been between them.—Hold then there, ſaid the one.—Beware of my ſheep ſtaping over the bridge, ſaid the other.—I care not, ſaid the one.—They ſhall all come this way, ſaid the other.—But they ſhall not, ſaid the one.—Then, ſaid the other, if thou make much ado, I will put my finger in thy mouth.—A turd thou wilt, ſaid the one. And as they were in contention, another Wiſe Man that belonged to Gotham came from the market with a ſack of meal on his horſe, and ſeeing his two neighbours at ſtrife about ſheep, and none betwixt them, ſaid he, Ah! fools, will you never learn wit; help me to lay this ſack upon my ſhoulder: they did ſo, and he went to the ſide of the bridge and knock out the meal into the river, ſaying, How much meal is there in the ſack, neighbours?—Marry, ſaid they, none.—By my faith, replies this wiſe man, even ſo much wit is there in your two heads, to ſtrive for that you have not. Now which was the wiſeſt of theſe three I leave you to judge.

TALE

TALE II.

THERE was a man of Gotham th
rode to the market with two bushe
of wheat, and becauſe his horſe ſhou
not be damaged by carrying too great
burthen, he was determined to carry t
corn himſelf on his own neck, and ſt
wept riding upon the horſe till he a

rived at the end of his journey.——No
I leave you to judge which was the wiſe
his horſe or himſelf.

Ta

TALE III.

ON a time the men of Gotham fain would have pinned the cuckoo, that ſhe might ſing all the year; all in the midſt of the town they had a hedge made in a round compaſs, and got a cuc-

hoo, and put her into it, and ſaid, Sing here and you ſhall lack neither meat nor drink all the year. The Cuckoo when ſhe ſee herſelf encompaſſed within the hedge, flew away. A vengeance on her ſaid the Wiſe Men, we made not teh hedge high enough.

TALE IV.

THERE was a man of Gotham, a he went to Nottingham market ſell cheeſe, and going down the hill Nottingham bridge one of the cheeſes fe out of his wallet, and ran down the hi Whoreſon, ſaid the fellow, what can yo run to the market alone? I'll now ſen one after the other; then laying down h wallet; taking out the cheeſes, he tum bled them down the hill one after ano ther; ſome run into one buſh, and ſom into another, however, he charged them to meet him in the market place. The man went to the market to meet with hi cheeſes, and ſtaid till the market was al moſt over, then went and enquired of hi neighbours if they ſaw the cheeſes come to market? Why who was to bring them ſaid one?—Marry, themſelves, ſaid th fellow, they knew the way very well.— A vengeance on them, they run ſo faſt I was afraid they would run beyond the market; I ſuppoſe by this time they are got as far as York; ſo he immediatel rode to York, but was very much diſap pointed; and to this day no man has ever heard of the cheeſe.

TALE V.

A Man of Gotham bought at Nottingham market a trivot, or bar of iron, and going home with it, his ſhoulder, grew weary of his carriage, and ſet it down, and ſeeing it had three feet, ſaid, Whoreſon, thou haſt three feet, and I but two, thou ſhalt bear me home, if thou wilt, ſo ſet himſelf down on it, ſaying,

Bear me along as I have bore thee,
For if thou doſt not, thou ſhalt ſtand ſtill for me.

The man of Gotham ſeeing that his trivot would not move, Stand ſtill, ſaid he, in the Mayor's name, and follow me if thou wilt; and I can ſhew thee the way——When he went home his wife aſked him where the trivot was; he ſaid, It had got three legs, and he but two, and he had taught him the ready way to his houſe, and therefore he might come home himſelf if he would. Where did you leave the trivot, ſaid the woman?—At Gotham bridge, ſaid he. So ſhe immediately went and fetched the trivot, otherwiſe ſhe muſt have loſt it, on account of her huſband's want of wit.

TALE VI.

A Certain ſmith of Gotham had a large waſp's neſt in the ſtraw at the end of his forge, and there coming one of his neighbours to have his horſe ſhod, and the waſps being exceeding buſy, the

man was ſtung by one of them; and being grievouſly affronted, he ſaid, Are you worthy to keep a forge or no, to have men ſtung with theſe waſps? O neighbour, ſaid the ſmith, be content, I ſhall put them from their neſt preſently. Immediately he took a coulfer, and heated it redhot, and thruſt it into the ſtraw at the end of the forge, and ſet it on fire and burned it up. Then, ſaid the ſmith, I told thee I'd fire themout of their neſt.

TALE VII.

ONE Good Friday the Men of Gotham consulted together what to do with their white herrings, red herrings, sprats, and salt fish, and agreed that all such fish should be cast into the pond or pool in the middle of the town, that the number of them might encrease against the next year; therfore every one that had any fish left did cast them immediately into the pond. Then, said one, I have as yet gotten left so many red herrings. Well, said another, and I have left so many whitings. Another immediately cried out, I have as yet gotten so many sprats left. And, said the last, I have as yet gotten so many salt fishes, let them go together into the great pond without distinction, and we may be sure to fare like lords next year. At the beginning of the next Lent they immediately went about drawing the pond, imagining they should have the fish; but were much surprised to find nothng but a great Eel! Ah! said they, a mischief on this Eel for he hath eaten up our fish. What must we do with him, said one to the

other: Kill him, ſaid one, Chop him i
pieces, ſaid another. Nay, not ſo, ſai
the other, let us drown him. Be it ac
cording replied them all. So they im
mediately went to another pond, an
caſt the Eel into the water. Lie there
ſaid theſe wiſe men, and ſhift for thy
ſelf, ſince you may not expect any hel
of us, ſo they left the Eel to be drowned

TALE VIII.

ON a time the men of Gotham ha
forgotten to pay their rent to thei
landlords, ſo one of them ſaid to th
other, To-morrow muſt be pay day, b
whom can we ſend our money that i
due to our landlord? upon which one o
them ſaid, I have this day taken
hare, and he may carry it, for he is ver
quick footed. Be it ſo, replied the reſt,
he ſhall have a letter, and purſe to pu
our money in, and we can direct her th
ready way.—When the letter was writ-
ten, and the money put in a purſe, they
immediately tied them about the hare's
neck, ſaying, You muſt firſt go to Lough-
borough, and then to Leiceſter, and a
Newark is our landlord; then commend

us unto him, and there is his due.—The hare, as ſoon as ſhe got out of their hands ran quite a contrary way.—Some ſaid, Thou muſt go to Loughborough, others ſaid, let the hare alone, for ſhe can tell a nearer way then the beſt of us; let her go.

TALE IX.

A Man of Gotham that went a mowing in the meads, found a large graſshopper; he immediately threw down his ſcyth, and ran home to his neighbours and ſaid the devil was there in the graſs, Then was every man ready with their clubs and ſtaves, with halberts and other weapons to kill the graſshopper.—When they came almoſt to the place where the graſshopper was, ſaid one to the other, let every man croſs himſelf from the Devil, for he will not meddle with him. So they returned again, and ſaid, We were bleſt this day that we went no farther. O! ye cowards, ſaid he that left the ſcyth in the mead, help me to fetch my ſcyth.—No, anſwered they, it is good to ſleep in a whole ſkin;

it is much better for thee to loſe thy cothy than marr us all.

TALE X.

ON a certain time there were twelve men of Gotham that went to fiſh, and ſome ſtood on dry land, and in going home one ſaid to the other, We have ventured wondefully in wading, I pray God that none of us come home to be drowned.—Nay, Marry, ſaid one to the other, let us ſee that, for there did twelve of us come out. Then they told themſelves, and every one told eleven, Said the one to the other, There is one of us drown'd. They went back to the brook where they had been fiſhing, and ſought up and down for him that was wanting, making great lamentation.

A courtier coming by, aſked what it was they ſought for, and why they were ſorrowful? O! ſaid they, this day we went to fiſh in the brook; twelve of us came out together, and one is drowned. Said the courtier, Tell how many there be of you, one of them ſaid eleven, and he did not tell himſelf.—Well, ſaid the courtier, what will you give me, an d

will find the twelfth man.—Sir, ſaid they, all the money we have got. Give me the money, ſaid the courtier, and began with the firſt, and gave him a ſtroke over the ſhoulders with his whip, which made him groan, ſaying, Here is one: and ſo ſerved them all, and they all groaned at the matter. When he came to the laſt, he paid him well, ſaying, Here is the twelfth man. God's bleſſing on thy heart, ſaid they, for thus finding our dear brother.

TALE XI.

A Man of Gotham riding along the highway, ſaw a cheeſe, ſo drew his ſword, and pricked it with the point, in order to take it up. Another man came by, and alighted, and picked it up, and rode away with it. The man of Gotham rides back to Nottingham to buy a longer ſword to pick up the cheeſe, and returning to the place where the cheeſe did lie, he pulled out his ſword, and pricking the ground, he ſaid, If I had this ſword at the firſt, I ſhould have gotten the cheeſe myſelf, but now another hath got it from me.

TALE

TALE XII.

A Man of Gotham who did not love his wife, ſhe having fair hair, her husband ſaid divers times, He would cut it off, but durſt not do it when ſhe was awake; ſo reſolved to do it when ſhe was aſleep; therefore one night he took up a pair of ſheers, and put them under his pillow; which his wife perceiving, ſaid, to one of her maids, Go to bed to my huſband, for he thinks to cut off my hair to-night, let him cut off thy hair, and I will give thee as good a kettle as ever thou didſt ſee.——The maid did ſo, and feigned herſelf aſleep; which the man perceiving cut off the maid's hair, and wrapped it about the ſheers, and laid them under his pillow, and went to ſleep; then the maid aroſe, and the wife took the hair and ſheers, and went into the hall, and there burnt the hair.——The man had a fine horſe, that he loved much, and the good wife went into the ſtable, and cut off the tail of the horſe, wrapped the ſheers up in it, and then laid them under the pillow again. Her husband ſeeing her coombing her head in the morning, he marvelled very much thereat. The

girl ſeeing her maſter in a deep ſtudy, ſaid What the devil ails the horſe in the ſtable, he bleeds ſo prodigiouſly? The man run into the ſtabte, and found the horſe's tail was cut off; then going to his bed he found the ſheers wrapped up in his horſe's tail. He then went to his wife, ſaying, I cry thy mercy, for I intended to have cut off thy hair, but have cut off my horſe's tail. Yea," ſaid ſhe, ſelf do, ſelf have. Many men think to do a bad turn, but it turneth oftimes to themſelves.

TALE XIII.

A Man of Gotham laid his wife a wager that ſhe could not make him a cuckold. No, ſaid ſhe, but I can. Do not ſpare me, ſaid he, but do what you can. On a time ſhe hid all the ſpiggots and fauſets, and going to the buttery, ſet the barrel abroach, and cried to her ſpouſe, pray bring me a ſpiggot and fauſet, or elſe the ale will run out. He ſought up and down, but could not find any. Come here, then, ſaid ſhe, and put thy finger in the tap-hole. Then ſhe called a taylor, with whom ſhe made a bargain. Soon after ſhe came to her huſband, and brought in a ſpiggot and fauſet,

ſaying, Pull thy finger out of the taphole, good cuckold. Beſhrew thy heart, for your labour, ſaid he.—Make no ſuch bargain with me again, ſaid ſhe.

TALE XIV.

A Man of Gotham took a young buzzard, and invited four or five gentlemens ſervants to the eating of it; but the old wife killed an old gooſe, and ſhe and the old gooſe was laid to the fire for the gentleman's ſervants. So when they came, and the gooſe was ſet before them, What is this? ſaid one of them. A fine buzzard ſaid the man. A buzzard! ſaid they, why it is an old gooſe, and thou art a knave to mock us; and in anger departed home.

The fellow was very ſorry that he had affronted them, and took a bag, and put in the buzzard's feathers; but his wife deſired him before he went to fetch her a block of wood, and in the interim ſhe pulled out the buzzard's feathers, and put in the gooſe's. Then the man taking the bag went to the gentlemens ſervans, and ſaid, Pray be not angry with me, you ſhall ſee I had a buzzard, and two of her goſſips eat up the buzzard.

for here are the fathers. Then he opened the bag and ſhook out the goose's feathers. They ſaid, why you knaves could you not be content to mock us at home, but art come here to mock us? Then one took a cudgel, and gave him a dozen ſtripes, ſaying, Heretofore mock us no more.

TALE XV.

A Man's wife of Gotham was brought to-bed of a male child, and the father invited all the goſſips, which were children of eight or ten years old. The eldeſt child's name was Gilbert, the ſecond's name was Humphry, and the godmother's name was Chriſtibel. Their relations admoniſhed them divers times, that they muſt ſay after the parſon.—And when they were all come to the church, the prieſt ſaid, be you all agreed of the name? Gilbert, Humphry, and Chriſtibel, ſaid they all.—The prieſt then ſaid Wherefore come ye hither? they immediately ſaid the ſame.—The prieſt being amazed, could not tell what to ſay, but whiſtled, and ſaid, Why.—And ſo did they. Go home, ye fools, ſaid the angry prieſt.—Then did Gil-

ert, Humphry, and Chriſtibel ſay the ame. The prieſt then provided godfathe and godmothers himſelf.

Here a man may ſee that children can do nothing without good inſtruction; and they are not wiſe who diſregard them.

TALE XIV.

A Young man of Gotham went a wooing to a fair maid; his mother warned him before hand, ſaying, whenever you look at her caſt a ſheep's eye at her, and ſay, How doſt thou do my ſweet pigſnie.—The fellow went to the butcher's ſhop, and bought ſeven or eight ſheeps eyes; and when this luſty wooer was at dinner he would look upon this young wench, and caſt a ſheep's eye in her face, ſaying, How do you do my ſweet pigſnie? How do you do ſwine's face, ſaid the wench, what do you mean by caſting ſheeps eyes at me?—O ſweet pigſnie, have at thee another.——But I defy thee, ſwine's fleſh, ſaid the wench.—What, my ſweet old pigſnie, be content, for if you live till next year you will be a foul ſow.——Walk, knave, walk

ſaid ſhe, for if you live next year you will be a great fool.

TALE XVII.

THERE was a man of Gotham who would be married, and when the day of marriage was come, they went to the church. The prieſt ſaid, Do you ſay after me. The prieſt ſaid, ſay not after me ſuch words, but ſay what I ſhall tell you. Thou doſt play the fool to mock with the Holy Bible concerning Matrimony. Then the fellow ſaid, Thou doſt play the fool to mock with the Holy Bible concerning Matrimony. The prieſt could not tell what to ſay, but anſwered What ſhall I do with this fool? And the man ſaid, What ſhall I do with this fool? So the prieſt departed, and would not marry him. But he was inſtructed by others how to do, and was afterwards married. And thus the breed of Gothamites has been perpetuated even unto this day.

TALE XVII

THERE was a Scotchman who dwelt at Gotham, and hetook a houſe, a little diſtance from London, and turned it into an inn, and for a ſign he would

have the Boar's Head, accordingly he went to a carver, and ſaid, Can you make me a Bare Heed. Yes, ſaid the carver. Then, ſays he, Make me a bare Heed, and thous have twenty pence for thy hire. I will do it, ſaid the carver. So on St. Andrew's Day, before Chriſtmas, he which is called Yeul in Scotland, the Scot came to London for his Boar's Head to ſet up at his door, I ſay, to ſpeak plain ſaid the Scotchman, haſt thou made me a Bare Heed? Yes, ſaid the Carver. Aye, then thous a good fellow. He went and brought a man's head that was bare, and ſaid, Here is your bare Heed. Aye, ſaid the Scot, you mickle devil! Is this a Bare Heed? Yes, ſaid the carver.—I ſay, ſaid the Scotchman, I will have a Bare Heed, like a Heed that follows the ſow that has gryces. Sir, ſaid the carver, I do not know a ſow and gryces. What whoreſon, know you not a ſow that will gret and groan, and her gryces will run after and cry, Aweek, aweek. O ſaid the carver, it is a pig. Yes, ſaid he Scotchman, let me have her heed made in timber, and ſet on her ſcalp, and let her W_ſing, Thip, whire. The carver, ſaid he

could not. You whoreſon, ſaid he, gang as ſhe'd ſing, Whip whire.—This ſhews that all men delight in their fancy.

TALE XIX.

IN old times, during theſe Tales, the Wives of Gotham got into an alehouſe, and ſaid, They were all profitable to their huſbands. Which way good goſſips, ſaid the ale wife? The firſt ſaid, I tell you all good goſſips, I can brew or bake, ſo I am every day alike; and if I go to the alehouſe, I pray to God to ſpeed my husband, and I am ſure my prayers will do him more good than my labour. Then ſaid the ſecond, I am profitable to my husband in ſaving candle in the winter; for I cauſe my husband and all my people to go to bed by daylight, and riſe the ſame. The third ſaid, I am profitable in ſparing bread, ſo I drink a gallon of ale I care not how much meat and drink I have at home; and then go to the tavern at Nottingham and drink wine and ſuch other things as God ſends me. The fourth ſaid, A man will for ever have more company in another's houſe than his own, and moſt commonly in an alehouſe. The fifth ſaid, My

husband is flax and wool to ſpare if I go to other folks houſes to do their work. The ſixth ſaid, I ſpare both my husband's wood and coals by talking all the day at other folks fire. The eight ſaid, Beef, mutton, and poor are dear, wherefore I take pigs hens, chickens, conies, which will be of a lower price. The ningth ſaid, I ſpare my husband's lye and ſoap, for whereas I ſhould waſhed once a week, I waſh but once in a quarter; then ſaid the alewife, and I keep all my husband's ale that I brew from ſowering, for as I uſed to drink it almoſt up, now I leave never a drop.

TALE XX.

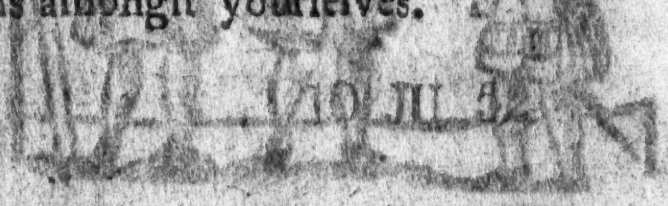
ONE Aſh-Wedneſday the Miniſter of Gotham would have a collection of his pariſhioners, and ſaid unto them, My friends, the time is come that you muſt uſe prayer, faſting, and alms; but come to be ſhrift, and I well tell you more of mymind. As to prayer, I do not think that two men in the pariſh can ſay half the Pater Noſter. As for faſting, ye faſt ſtill, for you have not a meal's victuals in a year. As for alms deeds, what ſhould they do [illegible], that have nonght to

ſake ? But one coming to ſhrift, confeſſed himſelf to have been drunk ſeveral times in the year, but eſpecially in Lent. The prieſt ſaid, In Lent you ſhould moſt re-

rain from Drunkenneſs, and from drink No, not ſo, ſaid the fellow, for it is an old proverb, That fiſh ſhould ſwim.—Yes, ſaid the prieſt, it muſt ſwim in the water.—I cry you mercy, quoth the fellow, for I thought that it ſhould have ſwam in fine ale.—Soon after the Men of Gotham came to ſhrift, and even the prieſt knew not what penuance to give: He ſaid, If I enjoin you prayer, you cannot ſay your Pater Noſter. And it is but a folly to make you faſt, becauſe you never eat a meal's meat. [illegible]ur hard

and get a dinner on Sunday, and I will come and partake of it.

Another man he enjoined o farewell on Monday, and another on Tuesday, and one after another, that one or the other would fare well once in a week, that he might have a part of their meat. And as for almsdeeds, the Priest said, Ye are beggars allexcept one or two; so bestow alms amongst yourselves.



FINIS.